Parana River Mud Makes 10,000 Islands; Magnificent Falls Greater Than Niagara

—By—
Frank G. Carpenter
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Flows Through a Valley Greater Than the Mississippi Which May Be Meat Market for the Whole World.

STEAMSHIP SAN MARTIN, on the Paraguay river, May 29.—For the past five days I have been steaming up the Parana river. I am in the heart of the Parana basin, which is potentially one of the world's greatest meat baskets of the future. It has already supplied vast quantities of beef and mutton for the warring armies of Europe, and it is also shipping meat northward for Uncle Sam's stomach.

As I left Buenos Aires I saw one of the Lamport & Holt steamers loaded with chilled beef starting out for New York, and sailing up the Rio de la Plata I passed the mouth of the Uruguay river, that carries down the cattle of Uruguay and the Argentine Mesopotamia to Buenos Aires and Montevideo.

The next morning we anchored in front of the Rosario, on the Parana, several hundred miles from the ocean. There the vessels were taking on indian corn for the horses of the armies now fighting in France, and all the way up the Parana proper, a distance as great as from New York to Chicago, I passed estancia after estancia upon which thousands of beeves were fattening on the rich grass. In some places I saw droves of horses similar to the hundreds which are now going by shiploads to Europe, and flocks of sheep which will soon be frozen mutton in the frigerificos of Buenos Aires.

At Corrientes I was near where the Alto-Parana flows into the main stream and a little later on entered the Paraguay, which extends from here more than 1500 miles northward, opening up another vast meat supply.

Watered By Great Rivers.

The Paraguay river has its source in the highlands of Matto Grosso, the mighty plateau that forms the height of land of the South American continent. The region corresponds to the great lakes region of North America, and it is covered with pastures. The Parguay flows through grass lands and forests for a distance as great as from Philadelphia to the Rockies. Not far north from where I am now is the mouth of the Pilcomayo river, that rises in the Andes and passes through the cattle lands of eastern Bolivia, flowing in a tortuous course of 1500 miles through unexplored wilds before it comes into the Paraguay. The Pilcomayo flows between the Chaco of Argentina and Paraguay countries that have pasture lands scattered here and there through them. The pastures are now being stocked, and they will add greatly to the meat supply of the world.

The system of rivers is immense. I traveled four days and four nights on the Rio de la Plata and Parana in coming from the ocean to the mouth of the Paraguay. The Rio de la Plata, where it empties into the ocean, is a vast estuary, 156 miles wide and it is fully that long to the point where the Uruguay and Paraguay join.

The Parana proper to where it is formed by the Alto-Parana and the Paraguay is 800 miles long, and it is from 10 to 15 miles wide throughout that whole length. If you will imagine a stream on the average about 14 miles wide running from Philadelphia almost to Chicago, you may have some idea of the Parana proper.

Inland Seas of Liquid Mud.

Both the Parana proper and the Rio de la Plata are more like inland seas of liquid mud than like rivers. I took a bath one morning on a steamer in the Rio de la Plata, just before coming into the port of Montevideo. The river there is 65 miles in width and it is the color of pea soup. As I stood in the tub I opened the spigot and let the water run out. In a short time I was standing in mud and when I stepped out my tracks on the bottom of the porcelain tub were as plain as that which scared Robinson Crusoe on the shores of his desert island.

The silt of the Rio de la Plata discolors the Atlantic for 98 miles out at sea. The Parana brings down a quarter of a million tons of mud every day, and it has so filled up the channel near Buenos Aires that that city has had to spend more than $40,000,000 in making the docks and dredgings that enable it to be one of the greatest ports of the world.

Mud Makes Multitude of Islands.

The water continues muddy all the way from Buenos Aires to where the Paraguay flows in. There is so much mud that it has built up tens of thousands of islands. The channels through which the steamer goes are everywhere about as wide as the Mississippi proper, but they wind their way in and out among these islands. There are times when you cannot see the mainland at all, and other times when you behold only a hazy line of blue over these low expanses of green, the blue being the highlands of the opposite shore. Now you seem to be far out on a sea of liquid mud, now you are close to the islands, and now near the shore of the mainland.

The country is so low that the islands seem to be floating, and in flood times there are really floating islands, consisting of great masses of vegetation that have been torn by the river from the highlands of Brazil and are moving slowly down to the ocean. Jaguars, deer, tapirs and other wild animals are sometimes seen on these floating islands. In some places the banks of the islands are steep. They have been coated and built up by flood after flood, as you can see by the strata which are so plain that they look like the layers in a cake and appear to be sliced down with a knife. Many of the islands are covered at flood times and then the river goes far out over the mainland. At Rosario, about 200 miles from Buenos Aires, the stream at low water is 15 miles wide, and in the floods it extends 10 miles farther out.

Many Are Inhabited.

Many of these islands of the Parana are inhabited. This is especially so of those near Buenos Aires, where hundreds of thousands of acres have been taken up by fruit and vegetable plantations. This region is known as the Tigre.

The islands are so close together that they seem one great body of land, separated only by narrow canals. There are villas on many of them, and the place is also a pleasure resort, and one of the gambling hells for the city. Farther upstream many islands are devoted to pastures. You see cattle feeding upon them and animals are ferried over from the mainland in times of drouth. The islands are as fertile as the valley of the Nile. They will raise rice, and it is believed that they might furnish enough of that grain to feed the whole country and give some for export. Altogether they contain thousands of acres, but the yform a very small part of the undeveloped regions of this mighty Parana basin, which potentially is one of the great food lands of the world.

Greater Than Basin of Mississippi.

The basin of the Parana is bigger than that of the Mississippi, and it is a question whether it has not more cultivable territory. It is more than 2000 miles long, and in places it reaches from the Andes clear out to the ocean. All the way up the Parana and Paraguay to where I am now, the country is one vast plain.

Until I reached the Paraguay river I saw no woods to speak of, and I was told that the plains extended back on both sides for hundreds of miles. With the exception of Uruguay, the plains are the only parts of the basin that have been developed, and they still are on the edge of their beginning. Nevertheless, they raise tens of millions of cattle, scores of millions of sheep, and they are now exporting more wheat and corn than any other part of the globe.

This vast basin is in the shape of a horseshoe, with the Parana flowing from the toe down through the center. The Andes and the strip of highlands that crosses Brazil form the back and upper end of the shoe, while it is bound on the south by the plains of Patagonia. The most of the basin has been built up by the rivers, and their silt has made it one of the most fertile lands of the globe.

The greater part of the basin is as healthy as any part of the Mississippi valley, the seasons being those of the Mississippi reversed. We go south in the winter to get warm. These people go north. A greater part of the country is in the temperate zone, and it may be compared to the United States. Paraguay is like Louisiana or Florida and the northern part of Argentina has sugar and cotton plantations. Further south the climate is as temperate as that of our middle states, and in the far south the winters compare with our semi desert northwest. Three-fourths of Paraguay, through which I am now steaming, is in the temperate zone. The climate is like that of southern California and the orange orchards are to be seen everywhere.

The stream is like an island-studded sea moving on slowly down toward the ocean. The channels are so wide that they have waves like the waters of a lake, and the sun dances over a golden expanse of rising and falling billows.

The channel runs this way and that. Now it runs straight north and south, and no walmost east and west. Within the last few years the river has been carefully surveyed and there are now light buoys which mark the route of the steamers.

The channel is about 12 feet deep all the way from Buenos Aires to Paraguay, and the volume of the river is next to that of the Amazon among the great streams of the globe. Dr. Elmer Corthell, the well known American engineer, who assisted Capt. James B. Eads in making the Mississippi jetties, and who was engaged on the port works at Buenos Aires, estimates that the annual flow of the Parana is double that of the Ganges, four times that of the Danube and five times that of the Nile. It is 80 percent larger than the flow of the Mississippi, and three times as great as the volume of the St. Lawrence. In other words, all of the water that annually pours down over Niagara Falls through the downspout of the great lakes and out to the ocean is only one-third as large as that which flows through the Parana system, this great downspout of the Andes.

Greater Falls Than Niagara.

This system also has greater falls than Niagara, in those of Iguazu on the Alto-Parana. The Iguazu falls are higher than Niagara, and they are twice as wide. I shall write again of them.

The transportation of the Parana is at its beginning. So far it has been controled by one man and his family. This is the Mihanovitches, an organization or company which has 200 vessels and employs something like 6000 hands. It has a capital of $12,000,000, and it carries more than four-fifths of the traffic of this great river system. It has vessels not only upon the Rio de la Plata and the Parana, but also upon the Alto-Parana and the Paraguay, as far as Asuncion.

Starts as Cabin Boy.

The story of Mihanovitch shows some of the possibilities of fortune-making in South America. The elder Mihanovitch, Nicholas, started life as a cabin boy. He was born in Austria, and when, at the age of 18, he landed in Montevideo, he had not a cent nor a friend. He got employment on the vessels of the harbor, and after a time was commanding a small river boat sailing from Buenos Aires. Later on he began to transport goods from ship to ship in the harbor, and to the ports, and gradually built up a transportation service which today is one of the large ones of the world.

When he began he had to buy his coal for cash, five tons at a time. When he died, only a short time ago, his vessels consumed 150,000 tons every year. He left millions and had other large undertakings outside his steamships. He was the founder of the La Blanca meat packing establishment, since bought by the Armours. He also owned several hundred thousand acres of land.

Good Opening for Vessels.

It seems to me that there are great openings for good ships on the Parana system. All I have seen have been crowded. The San Martin, on which I am traveling, has been full of passengers all the way to Corrientes, near the mouth of the Paraguay. It belongs to the Mihanovitches; and if it is any index of the other ships of the trust any company of well managed vessels could easily crowd it out of the waters.

The ship is a long, low, three-decked side-wheeler, with hundreds of cabins and a dining room at one end of the deck. Its accommodations are filthy. The food is not good, and but little attempt is made for the comfort of the passengers. There are crawling things in my cabin and the bathrooms and the other sanitary arrangements are such that they would not be tolerated on a European or an American vessel.

I am told that the line has other vessels that are newer and better, but I would advise all American tourists to examine personally the steamers of this line before they take passage and see what other lines have to offer. There is now a railroad connection between Buenos Aires and Asuncion, by which one can make the trip in two days.

If the boats were good the ideal way would be to go up by rail and to come back south by steamer, when the current of the river would enable the voyage to be made in three days. The rates on the river are $42 to Asuncion and $33 for return to Buenos Aires. There are reduced rates for the round trip.

Queer Passengers.

I wish I could show you the passengers that travel on these South American steamers. They are of all classes and conditions of men. We have here a dozen nationalities, including Russian colonists, Italian laborers and Jew peddlers. We have Germans on their way north for work, commercial travelers who drop off at the ports to go inland and sell goods, estancieros and their families, who own great farms near the river; a half dozen priests clad in as many different costumes; Brazilians bound for Matto Grosso, and many Paraguayans en route to Asuncion and beyond.

Just now is the summer on this side of the world, and the most of the passengers are going north for business or necessity, rather than for pleasure. In the winter the character of the crowd is far different. It then becomes somewhat like our exodus from the north to Florida and other parts of the south. Paraguay is the Florida of Argentina, and there are many fashionable people who go there to get away from the cold. It is, I suppose, much like the crowd of rich aristocrats I saw at Mar del Plata, which compares favorably in manners with the society of any part of the world.

"Unspeakably Common."

As to the people we have on this vessel, the majority of them are unspeakably "common." Three-fourths of the men tuck their napkins in at the collar, and the toothpick is universally used between courses. The same fork takes its turn in conveying food from the plate to the mouth, and in fishing olives and cucumbers from the mixed pickle bottle. There are some women who are really expert in getting their food to their lips with their knives. I have been watching the process, and so far not a drop of blood has been drawn. Just opposite me sits a girl of 18, who spears at the olive dish with her wooden toothpick, and thus transfers the fruit to her mouth.

The most of the people have better stomachs than I have and sometimes I can hardly sit out the meal. For instance, the man who sat beside me at breakfast this morning ate his egg raw. His first order brought two, which were rediliently bad. He made a wry face and sent back for others. When the second order came in he broke the raw eggs one after another into a glass, and then stirred them up with his fork and rank the stuf down.

Some of the Dishes.

But let me tell you what we have at our meals. The first breakfast is served as soon as you some out of your cabin. It consists of a cup of black coffee and a hunk of dry bread. There is a plate of butter before you which you may eat or not as you please. The first real meal comes at 11:30. It is called almuerzo; it begins with cold meats, a slice of bolonga sausage with green stuff on top. Then follows a soup, after which comes the beef and bones that were cooked in the soup. Sometimes the soup has also vegetables and you get these with the beef. The next course is some other meat or chicken cooked Spanish style, and after that a mutton chop or beefsteak with potatoes on the side. The almuerzo usually closes with fruit and black coffee.

Dinner is served at 6:30. It is known as comida. It is much the same as the almuerzo, except that there is an extra course or so and a dessert. A very fair wine is served with these two meals without extra charge. The cooking is not good from an American standpoint. Nevertheless the passengers seem to be pleased. One of them who sat beside me at dinner today and ate every course asked me if we ever had as good a meal as that in our country. I replied that I thought it likely, but I could see that he did not believe. As for my stenographer, a young American who cannot stand Spanish cooking, when he heard the above he remarked soto voce: "As good meals as that in our country. I should like to hit him in the bean."

Best Diploma, Book of Acts

Not So Much What College You Go Through as How Much College Goes Through You.

By Madison C. Peters.

IF more young men had the courage to be ignorant of many things they would avoid the calamity of being ignorant of all things.

It is not so much the college you have gone through as how much of the college has gone through you, that the business world wants to know.

The best doploma is the book of acts.

The world always makes room for the man who can bring things to pass.

Our country is full of persons who can do many things fairly well, but do not know how to do one thing supremely well.

The best workers in many lines are foreigners, who in the old world devoted the early part of their lives to learning a trade or profession and brought their superior workmanship with them, hence we seldom find such foreigners looking for a job.

The day of universal knowledge is past. The true measure of a successful man's learning today is the number of studies which he elects to let alone.

Single Aim Is Best.

Broad culture may be beautiful and manysidedness admirable, but it is always the man with single aim and intense purpose who concentrates their power, who are in demand when anything worth while is to be done.

It is not the diffused electricty, but the concentrated thunderbolt that is terrible in its power.

He who knows everything is always looking for something. The specialist does not have to look for a job, the job is looking for him.

To succeed you must be unanimous with yourself.

Agassiz was asked his opinion touching the chemical analysis of a plant. He answered: "I know nothing about chemistry." He was a naturalist. Even specialists have their specialty.

The man who runs off the side lines, unless they run on to the main track, wastes his energies, smothers his enthusiasm and usually fails in all that he undertakes.

To keep a gun from scattering put in a single shot.

The successful worker today is he who singles out from a vast number of possible employments some specialty and to that devotes himself thoroughly.

Average Man a Loser.

This is a poor country for the average man and worse still for the untrained man or the miscellaneous genius.

Everything is crowded downstairs.

The men who get to the top, over the heads of a hundred others, are not always the men of conspicuous ability, but availability.

The man who knows how to take hold of things by the handles has the call.

Young's phrase, "Time elaborately thrown away" applies to the man who attempts to know or do everything.

There is a "busyness" that is not business. It is seldom that the most brilliant achieve the highest success.

The sticker, like the postage stamp, gets there.

Persistency is more effective than brilliancy.

The men at the summit were not shot up in an elevator. They climbed there.

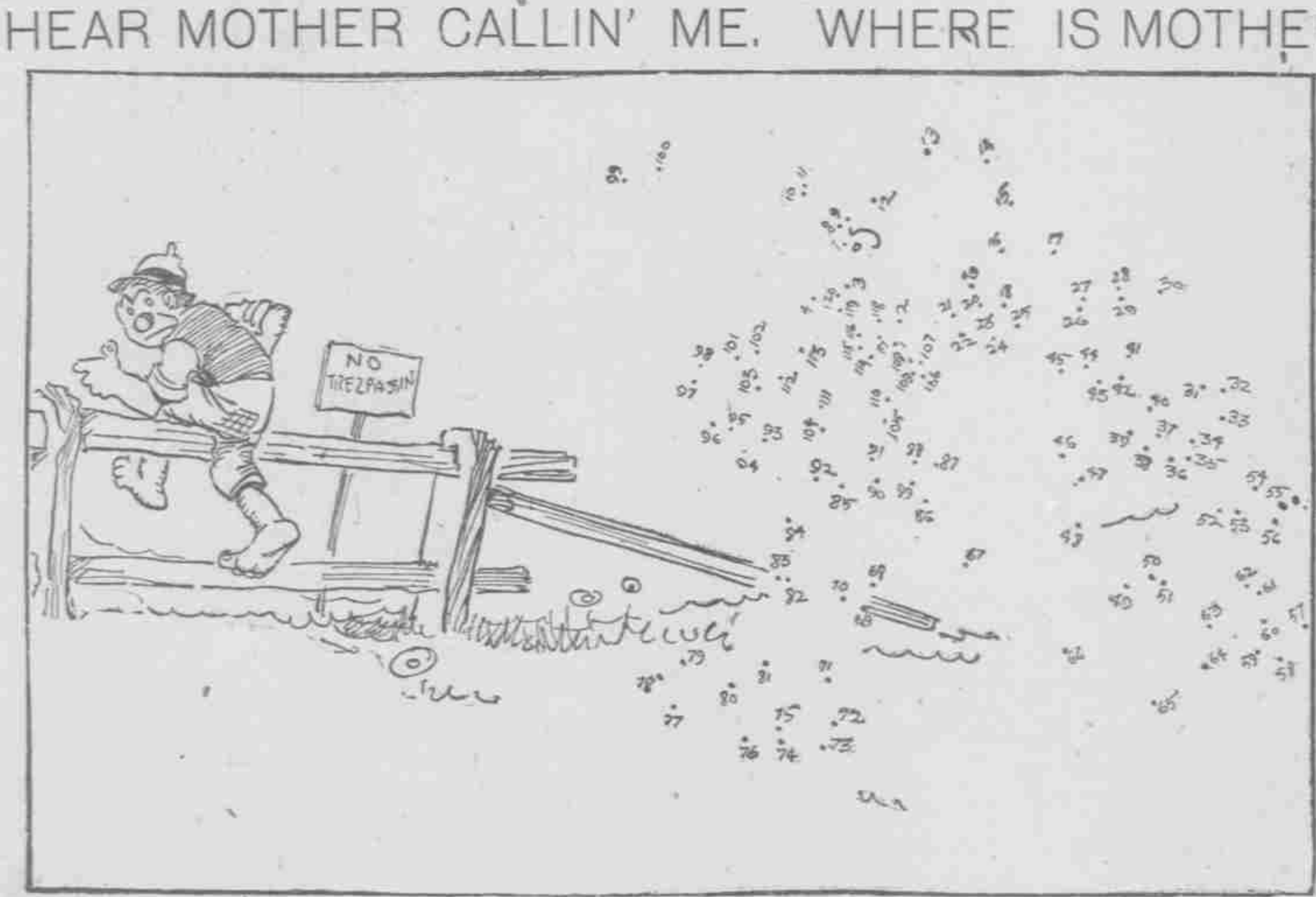
Men are not pulled into positions. They have to push themselves there.

No matter what you undertake, don't leave it until you can reach your arms around it and clench it with your hands on the other side.

As Dickens' friend would have us understand, "It's dogged does it."

The only "good time coming" you are justified in hoping for is that which you make for yourself.

I HEAR MOTHER CALLIN' ME. WHERE IS MOTHER?



Complete the picture by drawing a line through the dots. Begin at No. 1 and take them numerically.

Trees That Mock Old Age

Romance Connected With Patriarchs of the Forests

BY GARRET P. SERVISS.

THE individuality of trees is a very interesting subject. They are living beings, as much as animals are. It is an ancient notion that trees may possess a sort of self consciousness comparable with that of the lower animals.

Perhaps neither is aware of itself; but, on the other hand, perhaps both are, in some dim way. There are persons who, seeing a great tree cut down and falling "with a groan," cannot avoid a certain shrinking sensation. It is this undercurrent of feeling—superstition, if you will—that lends a high degree of interest to every ancient three known to have witnessed famous historical scenes and events. Such trees seem like living witnesses of long past times.

A remarkable instance is the cypress of Cortez, still living and carefully preserved and guarded, at Popotla, near the City of Mexico. A recent photograph of this tree, with its protecting railing, is reproduced herewith. The legend, which is probably a true one, avers that Cortez sat and wept under this cypress, which was then already a large tree, although that was nearly 400 years ago, after his terrible retreat from Montezuma's capital, the famous noche triste, "night of sorrow," when most of his bravest followers were slain!

Read the account of that awful night in Prescott's "History of the Conquest of Mexico." It is one of the most dramatic descriptions ever written. The old cypress in its present state seems an image of the fearful tragedy that it witnessed.

The Big Cypress, near Mexico City, under which Cortez wept after his defeat by Montezuma.

The race of the cypresses is a remarkable one, and has produced many notable individuals. They are celebrated for their longevity. Members of some of the species commonly attain a height of from 120 to 150 feet, and a diameter of trunk sometimes exceeding 10 feet. Splendid specimens are found on the Pacific coast. They easily attain an age of several, or many, centuries, and the wood of some species is astonishingly durable.

The island of Teneriffe, in the Canaries, possessed until the year 1868, when a storm destroyed it, what was called and generally believed to be, "the oldest tree in the world." According to the old system of biblical chronology, this "dragon tree of Orotava" was ancient enough to have been planted by Adam himself, for botanical authorities were united in estimating its age at 6000 years.

It belonged to a species peculiar to the Canary islands, the Dracaena Draco. It was 60 feet in height and 48 feet in circumference at the base of the enormous twisted stem. It has been hollow for centuries. From a period of unknown antiquity it had served as a place of worship for the Druids. In 1493, the year after Columbus first set out for America, Alonzo del Lugo, conquering Teneriffe, turned the holy place which the Druids had established inside the hollow stem into a christian chapel, and mass was celebrated there as long as the ruins of the tree lasted.

Humboldt and many other celebrated travelers in the days when there was something new for travelers to see and to tell, visited the great dragon tree and noted its gradually advancing destruction by tempests and by age. Professor Piazzi Smyth, one of the last of its visitors before its fall, described it as "no proper tree, with woody substance; it is merely a vegetable, an asparagus stalk, with a remarkable power of vitality and an equally eminent slowness of growth; and it is this last, indeed, not its size, which has gained it the credit of being the oldest tree in the world."

United States Navy at Close of Civil War Had 600 Vessels and Was Greatest on Earth

—By—
Rene Bache

Confederate States Built War Vessels in Corn Fields and for a Time Swept American Merchant Marine Vessels From the Seas.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 29.—Memorial day honors the men who fought on ships in the civil war equally with those who fought on land. Yet, in the present generation, few people remember the extraordinary difficulties under which, more especially on the Confederate side, the naval forces employed in that great conflict were built up.

The naval blockade killed the Confederacy. The "lost cause" was not destroyed by Sherman's march to the sea; not by Lee's surrender; not, indeed by any disaster to the Southern arms. It was slain by the blockade which cut off the south from supplies of food, clothing, guns and ammunition.

U. S. Had Greatest Navy.

At the close of the civil war the United States had a navy that was by far the most powerful in the world, comprising no fewer than 600 fighting ships of all classes. But its merchant marine, which had carried half the commerce of the globe, was gone. The Alabama and a few other ships employed by the Confederates as commerce destroyers had literally banished the flag of the Union from the high seas.

It has never come back. From the injury thus inflicted the country has not recovered, even measurably, in half a century.

The armies of the Confederacy killed a good many men, but the north did not suffer in consequence to any important extent either commercially or industrially. It was the navy of the south that did deadly mischief to the Union.

And yet, as will be remembered, the Confederacy at the beginning of the war had no navy. It possessed only one navy yard, at Norfolk, which the government burned before abandoning it. Sources of iron and coal supply were shut off from the south when the conflict started. Nevertheless, under difficulties that seemed well nigh insuperable, the Confederacy soon managed to create a respectable and even formidable maritime force.

Battleships Built in Cornfields.

She had the advantage of the services of a large number of officers who had resigned from the Federal navy. They proved themselves most resourceful, converting river craft and other such unpromising material into warships, and directing the hewing of timber—even gathering up scrap iron wherever it could be found—for the construction of fighting vessels. The Albemarle and Arkansas were both of them built in cornfields, and actually launched from cornfields.

The Albemarle (afterwards blown up by Cushing) undertook to encounter, when only half-finished, half-a-dozen Federal gunboats, and fleet of ironclads and war sloops ran through them, and, making her way to Vicksburg, was eventually destroyed by her own crew, to prevent her from falling into the hands of the enemy.

In the meantime the United States government was exerting its utmost efforts, and utilizing all of its enormous resources, for the augmentation of its own fleet. A blockade of all southern ports having been decided upon, vessels of every kind that could be utilized for the purpose were commandeered. Any sort of craft that would float a gun could be made to serve, where the lesser ports were concerned and in this way were employed ferryboats, excursion steamers, and even yachts.

What the Confederacy lacked in material advantages was made up to some extent by enthusiasm and determination. Thus, for example, at Charleston two ironclads were built in the spaces between wharves, which were utilized in lieu of drydocks. When these formidable vessels had attacked the Federal fleet and driven it off, it was claimed that the blockade was broken, and recognition of this fact by England and other powers was demanded. This gave the North for a time considerable anxiety.

Merrimac Causes Big Scare.

But it was the Merrimac that caused the big scare. Invulnerable to gunfire as she seemed, it was feared that she alone would break the blockade and open every Southern port to foreign commerce.

It seems astonishing that so much of the future of the world's affairs should hang upon one ship. If the Merrimac had been as formidable as was supposed, she alone might have brought all this to pass. And yet she was originally a vessel of the United States navy, which the Federals scuttled and sank when they destroyed the navy yard at Norfolk. She had been a steam frigate. The Confederates raised her and converted her into a shotproof and bombproof floating battery.

The idea for her conversion was original with John L. Porter, who had been a constructor in the naval service of the United States. He received little encouragement. Some people said she would never float, others said that she would turn bottom-side up; yet others said that the crew would suffocate, and that the concussion of the guns would deafen the men on board. Local opinion was the effect that she would never come out of the dock.

Causes Alarm.

The alarm felt in the North, when the Merrimac had been floated and had proved her fighting power, may be judged from what happened at a meeting of the cabinet in Washington. Secretary of war Stanton said: "The Merrimac will change the whole character of the war. She will destroy, one after another, every naval vessel. She will lay all cities of the seaboard under contribution. I shall immediately recall Burnside; Port Royal must be abandoned." He had no doubt, in fact, that the Merrimac was at that very moment on her way to Washington; and, looking out of the window, which commanded a view of the Potomac, he added: "It is not unlikely we shall have a shell from one of her guns in the White House before we leave this room."

This is quoted from a description given by secretary Welles of what happened at the cabinet meeting. He says: "Mr. Steward, usually buoyant and self-reliant, listened in responsive sympathy and was greatly depressed, as, indeed, were the members."

How the Merrimac Looked.

The Merrimac, in dry dock, presented an appearance very different from that with which she is associated in the popular mind. Pictures of her show only her roof-like superstructure, which was of relatively small size, the hull, which was that of a frigate, being entirely submerged. The "roof" was of oak timbers covered with iron plates four inches thick. At the bow a cast iron prow was attached, for ramming.

Had Many Defects.

Formidable though she seemed, the Merrimac had about as many defects as could very well be combined in a vessel of war. Her engine and boilers had been condemned on her last cruise as a frigate (while she was still the property of the United States), and her maximum speed was five miles an hour. She steered very poorly. The above-mentioned cast-iron prow was so imperfectly attached that it was broken off in ramming the Cumberland. She drew 22 feet of water, and so could not possibly follow the Monitor, the Union vessel which had a draft of only 12 feet, over the muddy shoals. If she had attempted to do so, she would quickly have run aground.

Monitor As Invulnerable.

The Monitor was equally invulnerable, much speedier, and more obedient to her helm. The two ships, in the first battle of history between iron-clads, fought for two hours at close quarters without making any impression upon each other. Some of the time they were within 50 yards of one another. At such short range the Monitor delivered two shots from her 11-inch guns squarely upon the side of the Merrimac, knocking down the men at the after guns. Lieut. Jones, commanding the Merrimac, found that he would do no damage to the turret of the Monitor, and so directed his fire upon the pilot house, corresponding to what he would call nowadays the conning tower. A shell struck in the sight slit and exploded, knocking the roof of the pilot house partly off, and blinding and stunning Worden. It was then that the Monitor retreated over the flats into shoal water, where the Merrimac could not follow.

Armored Gun Boats.

The advantages of armor in naval warfare were first practically demonstrated by the Confederate river gunboats—freight and passenger steamers which had been cut down and armored with any form of iron that happened to be procurable, from chains to bent rails. A number of Mississippi river boats were converted in this way into rather formidable craft, their upper works being torn off, and their machinery protected with railroad iron backed by oak timbers. Such a vessel carried from four to six guns.

Captures Mexican Vessels.

Just before the civil war broke out, there was a revolution going on in Mexico. Two steamers belonging to the revolutionists, which had been bought in Scotland, lay off Veracruz, displaying no flag. The U. S. sloop of war Saratoga demanded that they show their colors, and, when they responded by steaming away, sent two tugs after them full of marines. The steamers opened fire on the tugs, and 22 men were killed and wounded.

The Saratoga, being a sailing vessel, had found herself helpless in a calm. But just then a most opportune breeze came up; she soon overtook the steamers, and captured them both. They were sent to New Orleans as prizes, and were turned over to the United States marshal there, to be condemned as pirates. Both were taken over shortly afterwards by the Confederacy for war purposes, and one of the, renamed the McRae, became the flagship of the Mississippi river flotilla.

The Manassas was originally a seagoing tug. She was rebuilt with a turtle back, and armored with rails. Her principal exploit was the ramming of the Richmond, when the Federal fleet was driven out of the Mississippi river early in the war.

A fruiter named the Habana was converted into a sloop of war, ran the blockade at Pass a L'Outre (one of the mouths of the Mississippi), made her way into the Gulf and the Caribbean sea, and did a great deal of damage to Federal commerce.

Roosevelt's Uncle Confederate Agent.

These of course, were only a few of the efforts made by the South to extemporize and build up a navy. Meanwhile, in England, J. D. Bulloch, an ex-officer of the United States navy, and an uncle of Theodore Roosevelt, acting as agent for the Confederate government, built the sloop of war Oreto, which got away from England and did much damage as a commerce destroyer. She was eventually captured in the neutral harbor of Bahia by a Federal warship, and taken to Hampton Roads. This, of course, was contrary to international law, and, when Brazil demanded the return of the vessel, the United States government could not do otherwise than acquiesce. Before this could be accomplished, however, an army transport rammed her, "by accident," and sunk her.

Alabama's Frightful Record.

Bulloch also fitted out the Alabama, which, built in England was destined to make for herself so frightful a record as a destroyer of Federal commerce. Her pathway over the high seas was marked as by a trail of fire, and by the smoke of burning vessels. She was sunk, finally, by the U. S. sloop of war Kearsarge.

Several ironclads were built for the Confederacy in England and France, which, if they had managed to escape from neutral waters, would doubtless have done an immense deal of damage. As it turned out, only one of them got away—the Stonewall, which was blockaded in a neutral port by United States vessels of war, and again escaping, reached Havana only a short time before the civil conflict ended.

The Georgia, built on the Clyde, in Scotland, escaped to the high seas, and kept the ocean continuously for 12 months. Though possessing neither speed nor fighting capacity, she did a good deal of damage as a destroyer of commerce. Eventually she was sold by Bulloch at Liverpool, and was bought by a British citizen named Jones, who made thereupon a contract with the Portuguese government to carry mails between Lisbon and the Cape Verde Islands. She was seized by a United States war vessel off the mouth of the Tagus, and the unfortunate Jones never saw either his ship or his money again.

Children Sold For 50 Cents in Famine Districts Of China

Pekin, China, May 29.—A Reuter's telegram from Kweiyang states that "the Canton traders continue to carry on a traffic in women and girls, who are taken through the Tsiangbsien district to Canton."

Conditions of poverty are so intense that it is a custom throughout the country for parents to sell children, either boys or girls, when they are unable to support them. As a rule, the parents of a child can obtain a number of dollars, according to the child's age, but in famine districts, where poverty is increased, prices have run to below 50 cents per child. In the large cities, however, to which the traders from the interior bring the children for sale, the price may run up, for a strong and good looking girl in her teens, to over $10.